

CHAPTER 7: LIBRARIES

The Fort Worth Library is in its second century of serving its communities. The Library's mission is "to welcome and support all people in their enjoyment of reading and recreational materials, and their pursuit of learning and information." To that end, the Library has established a Five-Year Vision: the Fort Worth Library will be recognized as the best place for materials to support pleasure/recreation, learning, and information, and to showcase the diversity and history of Fort Worth through materials, programming, and exhibits.

This chapter provides information on current library facilities, technology, material collections, technology, programming, and services. It also includes general findings and recommendations from the Library's system master plan, "20/20 Vision," which was adopted by the City Council in December 2011. The Plan's recommendations are intended to enhance the library system so that it is able to better meet the needs of the 21st century, proposing enhancements, upgrades and improvements to facilities, more customized services, enhanced technologies, and more efficient operations. This plan will ensure that the Library continues to meet the needs of Fort Worth's diverse and rapidly growing population and remains a sound investment in Fort Worth's future.

Finally, this chapter also highlights services supported by the Department's three support groups: Library Advisory Board, Friends of the Fort Worth Public Library, Inc. (Friends), and The Fort Worth Public Library Foundation (Library Foundation), as well as other partnerships within the community.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Facilities: Libraries as Community Builders and Destination Places

Library facilities are intended to be community anchors serving as the heart of the neighborhood; to be a focal point, a gathering place, a destination or "commons" to its users. Responding to its role as a community builder, the Library is changing its image as it incorporates integrative, holistic concepts that bring people together, using ideas from retail and partnering with the private sector. As the neighborhood branch system grows, the Library is exercising foresight and planning for service offerings and delivery options. The Library system currently consists of 16 community facilities that include one central library and 15 neighborhood branch libraries. Most areas in the Far North, Far West, Far Northwest, Far South, and Far Southwest Sectors are not served by a neighborhood library. Additional neighborhood facilities and delivery options are necessary to better respond to the needs of unserved and underserved areas of the city.

The 2004 bond program included a new neighborhood branch library located in the Far Northwest Sector of the City. As a result, the new Northwest Branch Library was completed and opened October 30, 2010. As funding becomes available, the Department continues to redesign branch libraries, nine of which were built in the 1960s, long before computers became an integral component of library services. To



Northwest Branch Library



The new Northwest Branch Library opened October 30, 2010. The 2004 bond program provided funding for the new facility, which opened with the latest library technologies available, including WiFi and a self-check machine. (*Fort Worth Library, 2011.*)

date, six older branch libraries have undergone cosmetic renovations with support from the City and the private sector, through the Friends and the Library Foundation.

The 20/20 Vision Plan found the library buildings are structurally sound and well-maintained; however, only five facilities have more than one of the eight modern library elements. The Fort Worth Library is trying to offer the full range of library services in facilities that are too small, too old, and have neither the space nor the infrastructure to “do it all” well, or meet even minimum state and professional standards. The Central Library was found to be in a good location but doesn’t take full advantage of its location. It has poor street presence, the Teen’s area is too small and hidden, and the Children’s area is too large. Computers and popular collections are inconveniently located in the lower level. A strategic remodel of the Central Library could improve convenience and attract new customers. The Plan outlines three distinct phases for completing capital projects over a multi-year period. The total estimated cost for the facility projects is currently \$52.6 million.

Technology

Computers with high speed internet access are fundamental components of today’s public library services. New and emerging as well as existing standard technologies are under review as service delivery alternatives. The Library will begin to improve its response and services to Generation X and the Millennial Generation through better and increased use of technology. The Library provides WiFi (wireless internet), and a children’s online catalog, as well as downloadable services. Patron registration information, circulation records, holdings inventory, and maintenance are computerized. Enhanced online library card registration and the capability to accept credit cards are technology enhancements that have improved service to the public. The new Northwest Branch Library opened using Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology to improve efficiencies. Godfrey’s Associates found that time-saving technologies are underutilized in libraries. Therefore, RFID technology is initially being implemented at high-traffic branches where efficiencies are likely to be realized most, with implementation throughout the entire library system planned for completion by 2016.

Collections and Services

The Library’s collection enables Fort Worth residents to enrich their personal lives; educate themselves in areas of personal interest; develop informed opinions about issues of the day; gather, use, and evaluate information successfully; and gain an appreciation and understanding of other people, cultures, and viewpoints. Customers continue to use the collections heavily by checking out over four million items per year.

The collections emphasize current, popular, up-to-date materials for all age levels in a variety of formats, including books, CDs, videos, DVDs, and books on tape and CD, as well as electronic and internet resources. The Library will continue to increase its Spanish language holdings in order to better serve our growing population of Spanish speaking users.

Fort Worth Library 5-Year Statistical Trends

Measures	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011
Visits	2.47M	2.24M	2.09M	1.9M	1.92M
Circulation	3.84M	4.05M	4.19M	4.1M	4.51M
Onsite Computer Use	472K	454K	448K	424K	405K
Customer Satisfaction Survey	80%	76%	80%	N/A	3.9 out of 5.0

Circulation has increased in the past five years, while visits have decreased primarily due to more people using the internet for services. (Source: Fort Worth Library, 2011.)

Comparison of Benchmark Texas Cities, 2010

Measures	Arlington	El Paso	Fort Worth	Austin	Dallas	San Antonio	Houston
Circulation per Capita	5.91	2.39	5.71	5.57	6.30	4.01	3.55
Visits per Capita	4.31	2.93	2.67	4.75	3.80	3.08	2.71
Annual Budget FY 2010 per Capita	\$18.51	\$12.57	\$24.61	\$31.49	\$16.79	\$17.48	\$16.78
Materials Budget per Capita	\$2.34	\$0.88	\$4.10	\$2.84	\$0.72	\$1.96	\$3.66
Total Square Feet per Capita	0.34	0.41	0.43	0.51	0.77	0.31	0.43
Total Facilities	7	12	15*	22	27	25	39
2010 Population	365,438	620,447	720,250	774,636	1,316,350	1,651,448	2,099,451

(Source: Public Library Data Service Statistical Report, 2011.)

*Data does not include the 16th City of Fort Worth library, the Northwest Branch that opened late last year.

Collections are another aspect of the Library's role as "destination place". Customers come to research special collections and to see parts of collections on display. Through their ability to attract visitors, the Art Study Area and the Genealogy/Local History Unit also reinforce the Library's role as a community destination.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Library's overarching goal is to provide a welcoming environment and respond to the reading and learning/informational needs of its customers. To fulfill this purpose, the Library set the following goals and objectives for FY2012:

Enhance the city's image as a great place to live and work by providing materials and services that best respond to user needs.

- Increase number of items checked out to 4.6 M in FY12.
- Provide assistance to 1.96 M library visitors (2% increase) in FY12.
- Offer 293 workforce development classes in FY12.
- Distribute 7.5K books to children for home use in the Early Childhood Matters program in FY12.
- Provide digital access to three additional local history collections in FY12.
- Increase attendance at Every Child Ready to Read storytimes to 28.7K in FY12.
- Manage 2% increase in public computer logins from 405K to 413K annually.
- Increase number of library cards issued to 39,492 in FY12.
- Increase customer satisfaction rating from 3.8 to 3.85 in FY12.

Increase the Library's presence and visibility in the community.

- Increase volunteer hours donated to 15.3K in FY12.
- Implement a speakers bureau in FY12.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The Fort Worth Library's services will be guided by the following policies and strategies:

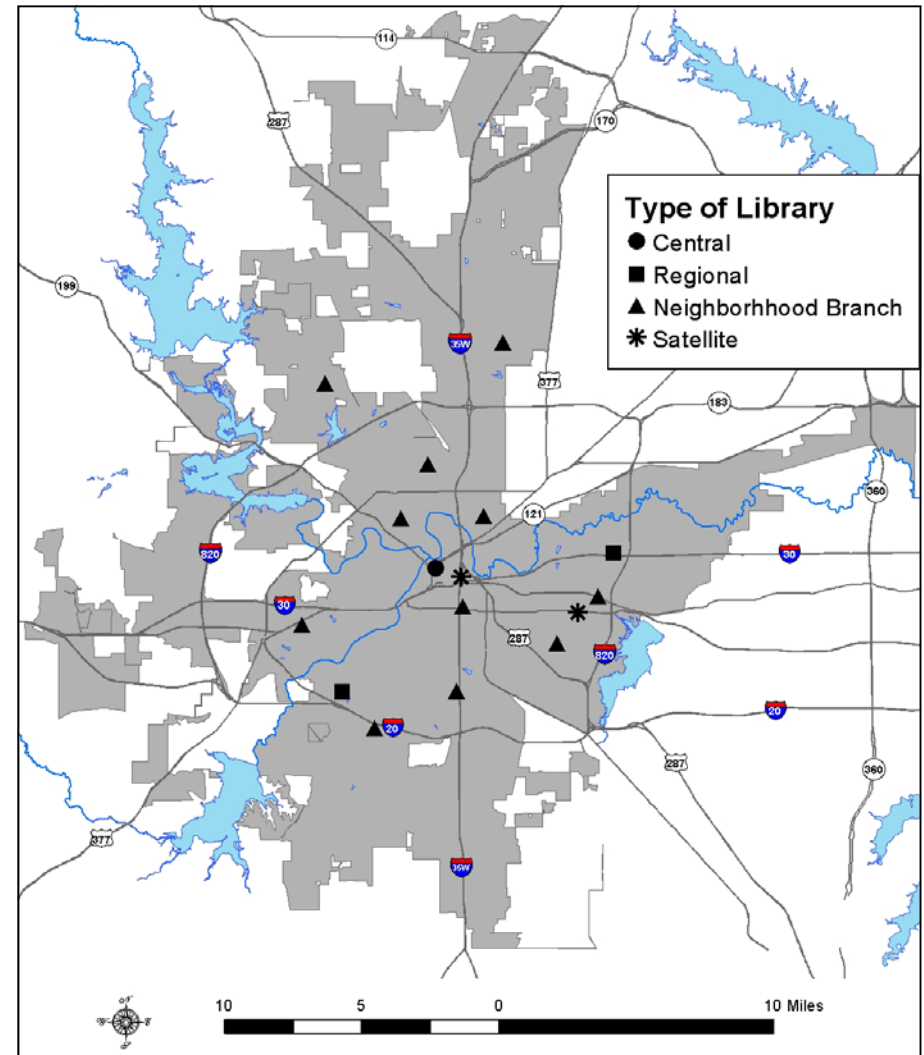
Policies

- Assure Library's role as "community builder" and "destination place" by promoting integrative, holistic concepts for facility planning and service delivery.
- Provide services that are responsive to the needs and desires of the community.

Strategies

- Be an active partner in the effort to increase the city's literacy rate through early literacy.
- Be an active partner in developing the city's workforce.
- Provide easy access to high quality library services.
- Promote appreciation of Fort Worth's rich and diverse cultural heritage.
- Provide well-maintained locations that accommodate changing service needs.

Location of Existing Library Facilities



The map above shows the location of the 16 existing library facilities. The 2004 bond program included a neighborhood branch library located in the Far Northwest sector. As a result, the new Northwest Branch Library was completed and opened October 30, 2010. (Sources: Fort Worth Library and Planning and Development Department, 2011.)

- Implement technologies and processes to increase efficiency and effectiveness.
- Increase brand awareness so people will know who we are, what we do and recognize our logo.
- Ensure employee and public communications are timely, accurate and reach their intended audiences.
- Raise the Library's profile in the virtual community.

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Community Programs and Partnerships

The Library offers system-wide programs through community partnerships and private sector support. These program opportunities recognize the Library's collaborative role and suggest new ways of building communities by combining neighborhood assets to create a new synergy benefiting the customers. In addition to its traditional programming partners, the Library works with museums, arts institutions and organizations, as well as health and faith based organizations. Examples include the Owsley Author series, a partnership with The Fort Worth Public Library Foundation, FWISD, and local private schools; The Big Read, a partnership with Texas Wesleyan University; eSkills Library and Job Center, a partnership with Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County and the Friends of the Fort Worth Public Library, Inc.; Dickens of a Holiday, a partnership with The Library Foundation and Junior Women's Club of Fort Worth; Tail Wagging Tutors, a partnership with Therapy Dogs International, Inc.; Author visit by Pam Greer, a partnership with the National Multicultural Western Heritage Museum; and Movies That Matter, a partnership with the Fort Worth Human Relations Commission.

Programs responding to the Library's priorities such as genealogy and local history, information literacy, workforce development, Every Child Ready to Read, and Early Childhood Matters are provided citywide. The individual branch libraries offer programs that change based on the needs of the community.

Also, the Cities of Fort Worth, Benbrook, Burleson, Haltom City, Keller, Richland Hills, and Watauga have an agreement (Metropac) by which residents of the seven cities may use their library cards at each respective library. Fort Worth provides automation services to these libraries for a fee.

Capital Improvement Projects

Capital improvements are listed in Appendix E, along with estimated costs and potential funding sources. The Library System Master Plan, 20/20 Vision, will guide future capital improvements. "Chapters," a children's bookstore at the Central Library sponsored by the Friends, opened in 2010. The former Meadowbrook Branch Library was renovated and reopened in summer 2011 as the eSkills Library and Job Center. Renovations to the Cavile Outreach Opportunity Library began in 2011 in collaboration with the Fort Worth Housing Authority. The Wedgwood Branch also received updated cosmetic finishes and furnishings as well as increased computer capacity in 2011.

eSkills Library and Job Center



The former Meadowbrook Branch Library was renovated and reopened in 2011 as the eSkills Library and Job Center, a partnership between the City of Fort Worth, Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County, and the Friends of the Fort Worth Library, Inc. Traditional library services were expanded based on community needs to include workforce development services. (Source: Fort Worth Library, 2011.)

Northwest Branch Library



Opened in 2010, the new Northwest Branch Library offers library services in an atmosphere that combines state-of-the-art technology and a creatively inspired atmosphere. (Source: Fort Worth Library, 2011.)